
Manner: ACCIDENT

Four hundred nineteen (419) deaths were certified as non-traffic accidents for calendar year 2001. The second largest group of these deaths were people who died as a result of accidental overdoses of drugs and/or poisons, representing 30% (124/419). The largest percentage of these accidental drug deaths, 40% (49/124) were between the ages of 40-49 years. The second largest group, 29% (36/124) included adults between 30-39 years. Fifteen percent (19/124) were adults between the ages of 20-29. Two accidental drug deaths were between the ages of 16-19 years. This number (124) represents a 30% decrease compared to the 177 accidental drug deaths in 2000, and represents a 24% decrease from the 164 accidental drug deaths that occurred in 1999. A more detailed discussion of these deaths is presented in the section "Death Due to Drugs and Poisons".

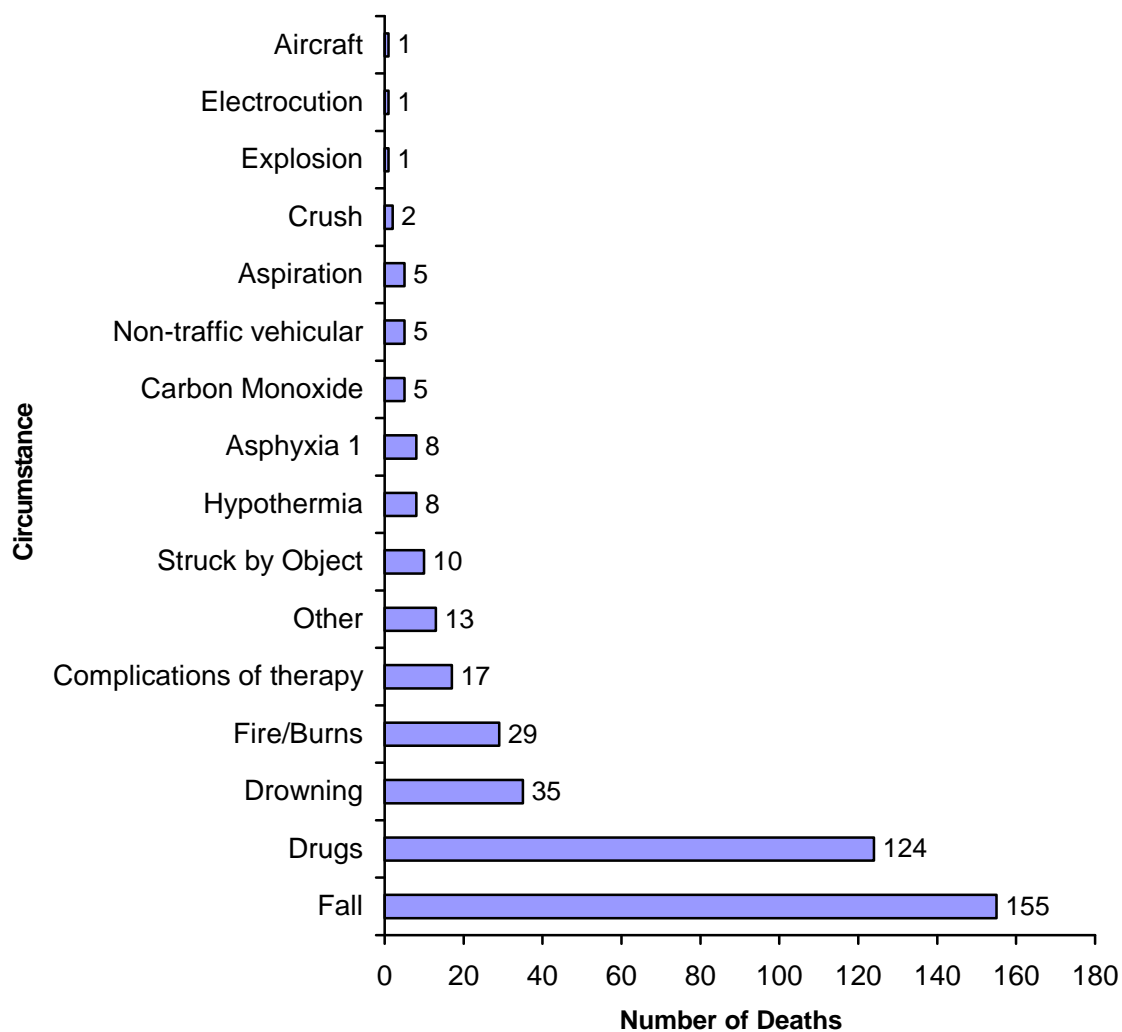
The largest group of accidental deaths were people who died as a result of falls, 37% (155/419). Of the 155 deaths attributed to injury sustained in falls, 85% (131/155) occurred in the age group 60 years and over. A large percentage of these falls were ground-level falls in elderly individuals, which resulted in fractures leading to complications such as pneumonia.

Twenty-nine (29) deaths resulted from fire or thermal injury, an increase from 23 in 2000. Of the 29 fire-related deaths, 62% (18/29) were the result of accidents that occurred outside of King County. The injured were transported to Harborview Medical Center's Burn Unit where they died.

Another category of accidental deaths worthy of comment is death resulting from drowning. There were 35 drowning deaths in 2001 compared to twenty-five (25) drowning deaths in 2000, 1999, and 1998. One drowning victim was a young child, under 5 years of age. A significant number of drowning deaths among adults were likely precipitated by a cardiac event or seizure while bathing.

A comment is necessary to clarify the cause of death listed as "aspiration". This type of death results from a person choking on a foreign body, often a bolus of food while eating. In 2001 there were five (5) deaths due to aspiration of a foreign body compared to ten (10) deaths in 2000; one (1) in 1999, and four (4) deaths in 1998.

Of the 419 accidental deaths in 2001, 22% (94/419) were the result of incidents which occurred outside of King County, but the death took place within King County. These deaths were the result of the injured being transported from outside King County to medical facilities within the county where they died. Since these deaths occurred in King County, they come under the Medical Examiner's jurisdiction.

Graph 3-1 Circumstances of Accidental Death in 2001

¹. This Category includes mechanisms such as compressive asphyxia, positional asphyxia, and suffocation.

Table 3-1 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Race of the Decedent

CIRCUMSTANCES / GENDER	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER		
Aircraft Accident	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Asphyxia	8	0	0	0	0		8
<i>Male</i>	8	0	0	0	0	8	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Aspiration of foreign body	5	0	0	0	0		5
<i>Male</i>	4	0	0	0	0	4	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Blunt Force/Crushing	2	0	0	0	0		2
<i>Male</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Carbon Monoxide	4	0	0	0	1		5
<i>Male</i>	3	0	0	0	1	4	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Complications of therapy	13	1	1	2	0		17
<i>Male</i>	8	1	1	0	0	10	
<i>Female</i>	5	0	0	2	0	7	
Drowning	28	0	1	0	6		35
<i>Male</i>	26	0	1	0	6	33	
<i>Female</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	
Drug	105	10	4	2	3		124
<i>Male</i>	74	8	3	0	3	88	
<i>Female</i>	31	2	1	2	0	36	
Electrocution	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Explosion	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fall	145	2	7	1	0		155
<i>Male</i>	82	2	4	0	0	88	
<i>Female</i>	63	0	3	1	0	67	
Fire/burns	27	1	0	1	0		29
<i>Male</i>	12	0	0	1	0	13	
<i>Female</i>	15	1	0	0	0	16	

Table 3-1 (Cont..) Circumstances of Accidental Death and Race of the Decedent

CIRCUMSTANCES / GENDER	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER		
Hypothermia	5	1	0	1	1		8
<i>Male</i>	3	1	0	1	1	6	
<i>Female</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	
Non-traffic vehicle	4	0	1	0	0		5
<i>Male</i>	3	0	1	0	0	4	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Struck by Object	8	0	2	0	0		10
<i>Male</i>	4	0	2	0	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Other	13	0	0	0	0		13
<i>Male</i>	10	0	0	0	0	10	
<i>Female</i>	3	0	0	0	0	3	
Total	370	15	16	7	11		419
Percent	88%	4%	3%	2%	3%		

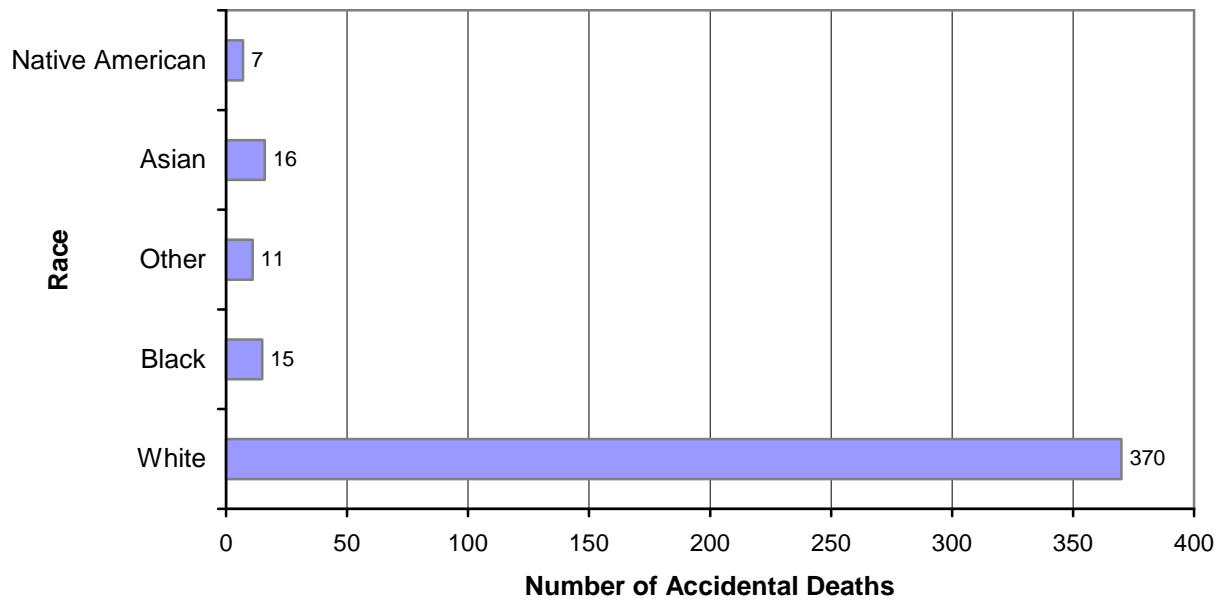
Graph 3-2 Accidental Deaths and Race of the Decedent

Table 3-2 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Age Group of the Decedent

Circumstances / Gender	AGE GROUP (YEARS)														SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	< 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +			
Aircraft Accident	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
Male	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Asphyxia	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	8		
Male	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	8		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Aspiration of foreign body	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	5		
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	4		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1		
Carbon Monoxide	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	5		
Male	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1		
Blunt Force/Crushing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3		
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Complications of therapy	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	5	3	2	1	0	17		
Male	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	1	0	0	10		
Female	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	7		
Drowning	0	1	4	1	2	8	5	10	3	1	0	0	0	35		
Male	0	1	3	1	2	8	5	9	3	1	0	0	0	33		
Female	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2		
Drug	0	0	0	1	2	19	36	49	13	4	0	0	0	124		
Male	0	0	0	0	2	12	26	36	8	4	0	0	0	88		
Female	0	0	0	1	0	7	10	13	5	0	0	0	0	36		
Electrocution	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1		
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Explosion	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Fall	0	0	1	0	2	2	5	7	7	14	25	59	33	155		
Male	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	5	6	9	20	34	7	88		
Female	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	1	5	5	25	26	67		
Fire/burns	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	6	4	2	12	0	29		
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	2	1	3	0	13		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	1	9	0	16		

Table 3-2 (Con't) Circumstances of Accidental Death and Age Group of the Decedent

Circumstances / Gender	AGE GROUP (YEARS)														SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	< 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +			
Hypothermia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	0	8		
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	6		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2		
Non-traffic vehicle	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	5		
Male	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		
Struck by Object	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	10		
Male	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	6		
Female	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4		
Other	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	3	3	0	1	0	0	12		
Male	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	9		
Female	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3		
Total	5	4	7	3	8	37	53	84	44	31	36	74	33	419		
Percent	1.2	1	1.7	0.7	1.9	8.8	13	20	11	7.4	8.6	18	7.9			

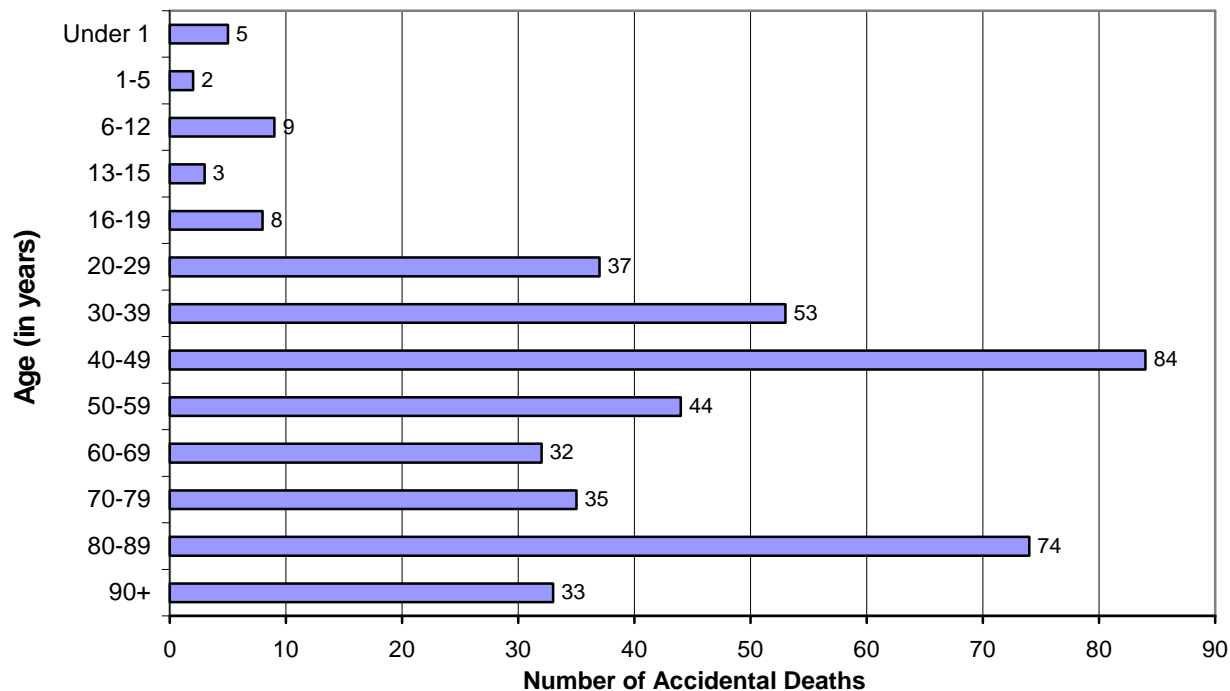
Graph 3-3 Accidental Deaths and Age Group of the Decedent

Table 3-3 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Gender of the Decedent

CIRCUMSTANCES	GENDER		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Aircraft Accident	1	0	1
Asphyxia	8	0	8
Aspiration of foreign body	4	1	5
Blunt Force/Crushing	3	0	3
Carbon Monoxide	4	1	5
Complications of therapy	10	7	17
Drowning	33	2	35
Drugs	88	36	124
Electrocution	1	0	1
Explosion	1	0	1
Fall	88	67	155
Fire/burns	13	16	29
Hypothermia	6	2	8
Non-traffic vehicle	4	1	5
Struck by object	6	4	10
Other	9	3	12
Total	279	140	419
Percent	66.6%	33.4%	

Table 3-4 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Blood Alcohol**Test Results of the Decedent**

CIRCUMSTANCES	TESTED		NOT TESTED	TOTAL
	TESTED POSITIVE	TESTED NEGATIVE		
Aircraft Accident	0	1	0	1
Asphyxia	0	7	1	8
Aspiration of foreign body	1	4	0	5
Blunt Force/Crushing	0	0	3	3
Carbon Monoxide	1	3	1	5
Complications of therapy	0	2	15	17
Drowning	11	9	15	35
Drugs	41	80	3	124
Electrocution	0	1	0	1
Explosion	0	0	1	1
Fall	9	38	108	155
Fire/burns	5	14	10	29
Hypothermia	2	4	2	8
Non-traffic vehicle	0	4	1	5
Struck by object	1	9	0	10
Other	0	12	0	12
Total	71	188	160	419
Percent	17%	45%	38%	

